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Official Report of Debates (Hansard)

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Journal des débats (Hansard)

G-21

Standing Committee on
General Government

Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales

Safer School Zones Act, 2017

Loi de 2017 sur la sécurité
accrue des zones d'école

2nd Session
41st Parliament
Monday 8 May 2017

2^e session
41^e législature
Lundi 8 mai 2017

Chair: Grant Crack
Clerk: Sylwia Przezdziecki

Président : Grant Crack
Greffeière : Sylwia Przezdziecki



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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Monday 8 May 2017

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES
AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Lundi 8 mai 2017

*The committee met at 1402 in committee room 2.*SAFER SCHOOL ZONES ACT, 2017
LOI DE 2017 SUR LA SÉCURITÉ ACCRUE
DES ZONES D'ÉCOLE

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters / Projet de loi 65, Loi modifiant le Code de la route relativement aux limites de vitesse dans les municipalités et à d'autres questions.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Good afternoon. We are here for clause-by-clause of Bill 65, An Act to amend the Highway Traffic Act in respect of speed limits in municipalities and other matters.

When we adjourned last Wednesday, I believe, we were doing motion 215. A vote was supposed to take place when the adjournment took place, and I believe that was a recorded vote. We'll begin by having that vote now.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Please remind us of what we're voting on.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): We have section 12, PC motion number 215—amendment of the short title.

Mr. Arthur Potts: What motion number is this?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): You should have it there on your agenda. Does everyone have that? It's on your desk.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Chair, can I ask for a recorded vote—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Yes, that was done.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: —on everything moving forward?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Everything? Okay.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Can we proceed to the vote at this point?

Ayes

Harris, Nicholls.

Nays

Colle, Hoggarth, Martins, Potts, Vernile.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Just for the record, so it's clear what we're voting on: We're voting on PC motion 215, right? Because that's what we discussed last week.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Yes.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Okay. I just want to be sure on what we're doing there. Thank you.

Interjections.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I did vote. No, I voted.

Interjection.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I voted.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Yes, he voted.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przedziecki): In the nays?

Mr. Wayne Gates: I voted against the PC motion.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylwia Przedziecki): Nays: Mr. Gates.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): So the motion is lost.

Mr. Michael Harris: Point of order. Chair, I would like to seek unanimous consent to move a motion to introduce a new section, 4.1, to the bill, on school bus safety, to prevent blow-bys on school buses.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Can we finish, please, with section 12?

Mr. Michael Harris: That's the end of the bill, though.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): We're in the middle of—

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm asking to introduce a new section, 4.1, of the bill—to go back.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): I will allow that.

Mr. Michael Harris: I seek unanimous consent to move a motion to introduce a new section, 4.1, to the bill, on school bus blow-bys.

Interjections: No.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): That amendment is lost.

Mr. Michael Harris: Guys, it's so unfortunate that you've put partisan politics ahead of student safety. Truly, you have. That's a fact. So we're not going to participate in this anymore. We're leaving.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Chair, would I be permitted to offer some comments at this point?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): How about doing that when we're dealing with the whole bill?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Just for the record, if it's possible to offer some comments, is that permissible at this point?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Let's finish with section 12 first. Shall section 12 carry?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Are you doing a recorded vote?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Yes. Recorded vote.

Ayes

Colle, Gates, Hoggarth, Martins, Potts, Vernile.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Section 12 is carried.

I can entertain comments at this point. Is it towards the bill as a whole?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Yes, it reflects on the bill.

Interruption.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Shall the title of the bill, as amended, carry?

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Recorded vote.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Shall the title of the bill carry?

Ayes

Colle, Gates, Hoggarth, Martins, Potts, Vernile.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Carried.

The next shall be, shall Bill 65, as amended, carry? Any discussion? Ms. Vernile.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Thank you, Chair. Just for the record, I want to say that I find it very disappointing that the PC members have walked out. Their leader has said that we're playing petty partisan politics with this bill. I want to remind the PCs, and the public, of a few facts about the PCs' record on Bill 65.

1410

Throughout second reading debate, the member for Kitchener-Conestoga made countless references to this bill being a cash grab, or a cash camera for government. That is why—some sort of hidden agenda to allow municipalities, on toll highways—they debated it from that point of view. This sort of fearmongering is only designed to spread misinformation about the bill.

Then the PCs voted against the bill at second reading. That's very important, because it means that they disagree with even the principle of the bill: to lower speeds around vulnerable road users. They didn't want the bill going forward.

Here in committee, we have seen delaying tactics continuing. First, they filed 214 amendments to an eight-page bill. Then they filed over 150 additional amendments as we met for the first day of clause-by-clause consideration.

We recognize that all members here do have the right to submit amendments. However, the vast majority of their amendments simply exempted individual streets from the bill, including Avenue Road, just up the street from here. We heard from the principal of Allenby school, who told us that the students, parents and teachers are under siege every day, trying to get to and from school. Two teachers there have seen their careers ended by speeding cars.

They were not substantive amendments, and they were just a delaying tactic. At least in one instance, they didn't even vote for their own amendment, because they recognized the absurdity of that amendment.

They know that they're on the wrong side of this bill, and now we're seeing Trump-style diversionary tactics to try and save face.

We recognize that at least one PC member takes the bill very seriously, and we applaud the member from Chatham-Kent-Essex for his PMB that would, if passed, allow camera footage from school buses to be used in court without a witness. We had legal officials from the Ministry of Transportation, though, speak to the amendment, and they highlighted some concerns as it is written. Their expert advice is that those photos would not hold up in a court of law—that the cameras don't accurately capture the offence. This is a very important piece that needs to be addressed. But I do want to say here and now that this is a good idea that deserves further consideration and consultation. That's why the Minister of Transportation has sent a letter to him to tell him about a path for moving forward on this idea.

While we recognize that Mr. Nicholls takes this all very seriously, what we find particularly galling is that the member from Kitchener-Conestoga accused the Liberals and the NDP of playing games throughout this bill. In addition to all of the amendments that he filed as a delay tactic, when we met, he called a 20-minute recess right after confirming that there was less than 20 minutes left in the committee. His conduct from start to finish here has made a mockery of our process and the seriousness of the debate before us.

AMO, the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, which represents 444 municipalities, supports Bill 65. Chiefs of police right across Ontario support Bill 65. Community safety experts and school principals are all in support.

Mr. Harris's filibuster has delayed this bill and has prevented the committee from considering other important government legislation referred to. We encourage him to stop. He has walked out, so I suppose we don't have to worry about that anymore. But it has been very disappointing, his behaviour, throughout all of this.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Any further debate?

Mr. Wayne Gates: Am I allowed to say something here?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Mr. Gates.

Mr. Wayne Gates: All I'm going to say is that I don't care whether you're a Liberal, a PC or an NDP through

this whole process—I think we all care about our kids. We all care about our grandkids. We care about our teachers and our principals getting to school safely. I think that for any leader of any party to accuse any of the 107 members of this Legislature, that we don't care about our kids—I think, is very, very disappointing in showing that type of leadership.

Those are my comments. I'm very disappointed that somebody would say that. I can tell you that if somebody said that about me, I'm not really sure how I'd respond, and I'd be concerned that it might not be in a professional manner.

I think we all give all of our time to do the best we can to create laws in this province that are in the best interests of everybody. But I think it's certainly disheartening when you hear other members say that anybody in this Legislature, including support staff or anybody, doesn't care about our kids and our grandkids. It's a pretty sad day in the province of Ontario, if that's how you're going to conduct yourself here.

I just wanted to make the comment that I certainly don't feel that way.

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Hear, hear.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Thank you, Mr. Gates. Any further comment?

Shall Bill 65, as amended, carry? A recorded vote was called for.

Ayes

Colle, Gates, Hoggarth, Martins, Potts, Vernile.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Opposed? Carried.

Mr. Wayne Gates: Does that make it unanimous?

Laughter.

Mr. Wayne Gates: I'm just trying to bring a smile to everybody's face on a Monday afternoon.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Shall I report the bill, as amended, to the House?

Ayes

Colle, Gates, Hoggarth, Martins, Potts, Vernile.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): None opposed. Carried.

Any further business? Mr. Colle.

Mr. Mike Colle: I just want to start organizing for the next bill before this committee. That's the anti-racism bill, Bill 114. I have copies of suggestions on getting this committee organized for the next session. Do you want me to read it into the record? How do you want to do this?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Mr. Colle has put forward a motion to organize Bill 114, An Act to provide for Anti-Racism Measures. Would you like to read that into the record?

Mr. Mike Colle: I move:

(1) That the committee meet in Toronto on Monday, May 15, 2017, for the purpose of holding public hearings on the bill.

(2) That the Chair, on behalf of the committee, request from the House leaders that a motion be presented in the House to authorize the committee to meet from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. on Monday, May 15, 2017, in addition to its regularly scheduled meeting time, for the purpose of public hearings on the bill.

(3) That the Clerk of the Committee, in consultation with the Chair, post information regarding public hearings on the Ontario parliamentary channel, the Legislative Assembly website and on CNW newswire service; and that the Clerk of the Committee identify the various media outlets or other vehicles of communication that would inform indigenous and racialized communities of the hearings.

(4) That interested parties who wish to be considered to make an oral presentation contact the Clerk of the Committee by 2 p.m. on Thursday, May 11, 2017.

(5) That, should the hearings be oversubscribed, the Clerk of the Committee provide a list of all interested presenters to the subcommittee by 3 p.m. following the deadline for requests to appear.

(6) That each subcommittee member, or their delegate, provide a prioritized list of witness selections based on the list of interested presenters received from the Clerk of the Committee by 4 p.m. on that same day.

(7) That witnesses be offered five minutes for their presentation followed by up to nine minutes of questions by committee, with three minutes per caucus.

(8) That the deadline for written submissions be 6 p.m. on Monday, May 15, 2017.

(9) That amendments to the bill be filed with the Clerk of the Committee by 2 p.m. on Thursday, May 18, 2017.

(10) That the committee meet on Tuesday, May 23, 2017, for clause-by-clause consideration of the bill.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Thank you, Mr. Colle. Is there any debate?

Mr. Arthur Potts: We changed it—Monday is a holiday.

Mr. Mike Colle: It should be the 29th, not the 23rd. Excuse me. Tuesday, May 29 is a holiday.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Monday, May 22 is—

Ms. Daiene Vernile: Change the 22nd to the 29th because we're on constit week.

Mr. Mike Colle: That's the long weekend.

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Mrs. Cristina Martins: Monday, May 29.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): May 29, okay.

Any discussion?

Mr. Arthur Potts: No discussion.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): No discussion.

Mr. Colle, the Clerk has advised me that the timeline is not feasible. It's too short a timeline to—

Mr. Mike Colle: What change does the Clerk suggest?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylvia Przezdziecki): Mr. Colle, I just wanted to address point number 3, where it suggests “that the Clerk of the Committee identify the various media outlets or other vehicles of communication that would inform indigenous and racialized communities of the hearings.”

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylvia Przezdziecki): Given that the motion does specify a May 11 deadline, which is this Thursday, a lot of these—

Mr. Mike Colle: Won’t go out in time.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylvia Przezdziecki): A lot of these are weeklies, but even for a daily, there are a number of business days that are required for lead time. One of the standard options that the committees often choose is the CNW newswire service, which has a potential of reaching various media.

Mr. Mike Colle: Okay. You can make that. That’s fine.

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylvia Przezdziecki): I can certainly make the inquiries, but just to let the committee know that the timeline is—

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, yes, you can make that change. But it can go on the parliamentary channel right away, right?

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Sylvia Przezdziecki): Yes, the first part of this—Ontario parliamentary channel, Legislative Assembly website and CNW newswire service, which is actually what I was just referring to—that we can certainly do in-house.

It’s just the second part of point (3). I can inquire with our advertising agency, but I anticipate this could pose some problem because, often, these smaller papers are weeklies—

Mr. Mike Colle: Whatever is possible.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: Whatever minor adjustments you have to make for practical purposes are acceptable by the committee. We’re not going to stand in the way of it.

Interjections.

Mr. Mike Colle: Anyway, whatever change you want to make that is appropriate, you can. We’ll leave it at the discretion of the committee.

Mr. Arthur Potts: Of the Clerk.

Mr. Mike Colle: Of the Clerk.

Interjections.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): Okay, there has been a change, as you know, from May 22 to May 29. Does the committee wish to vote on those changes? Agreed? That’s carried.

There’s a motion of the floor and there is no further debate, so I will put the question.

Mr. Mike Colle: Yes, put the question.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Granville Anderson): All those in favour of the motion? Opposed? The motion is carried.

This committee is adjourned until 3:30 p.m. tomorrow—for public hearings on Bill 124. Adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1425.

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